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1810

Angina Pectoris #12
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The disease of Angina Pectoris like many others, has till of late years been treated with but little success — Physicians of former times, influenced by erroneous theories in medicine, have accordingly prescribed remedies, which have not had their desired effects — Happily for mankind, the Utility of disease has contributed to extend, and enlarge our knowledge of the nature and cure of diseases, and greatly to diminish the number of incurable ones*. It throws behind the fire or leaves to moulder in the drawers of the Apothecaries the lungworts — liver-worts, — spleen-worts —

* Dr. Rush's lectures.

worm-worts, and brain-worts of the old school and substitute for them a select number of active medicines; to be given in different doses, in different preparations, and at different times in all diseases"

In the following essay I propose to treat of the nature & symptoms of this terrible disease viz Angina Pectoris - and the mode of treatment which has been found most successful; and first of all I will premise a few remarks -

1st The seat of this disease appears to be in the heart - I infer this from dissections; which have exhibited a great variety of appearances - 1st An unusual quantity of fat about the

heart – 2dly ossification of the valves of the heart and aorta – 3dly A membrane in the heart, produced no doubt, by violent inflammation there – 4thly A preternatural quantity of water in the peri=cardium – 5thly No disease at all; from morbid excitement transcending the grade of inflammation – All the above appearances, have unfortunately been mistaken for the cause of this disease – Hence all attempts to in=vestigate the true nature of it by means of dissection, have failed of success – But later experience have

proved them to be the effects, not the cause of morbid excitement, or in other words, disease —

2dly This disease frequently alternates with hydrotherapy, from which it may be distinguished by its attacking mostly hypochondriacal and hysterical persons, by not being constant, and attended with no affection of the head —

3dly It attacks men more frequently than women — out of a hundred persons, Dr Heberden tells us, labouring under this disease, there were women and one a boy of twelve

years old – The rest were men, near or about the fifteenth year of their age – Persons disposed to obesity, that lead a sedentary life are most subject to it –

4 thly It is frequently a symptom of gout, or perhaps more properly, it is produced by a translation of gout –

5 thly It is influenced by the different changes in the weather – Moderately warm weather, succeeded by intense cold has a wonderful effect upon this disease – This information I received from a young lady, labouring under it; whose symptoms

were always greatly heightened, whenever such a change in the weather took place —

I proceed in the next place to remark that, as in other diseases, debility is the predisposing cause of this — The symptoms are a sudden difficulty of breathing upon ascending a pair of stairs, attended with pain in the arms and most generally, with a violent cough — Upon standing still or sitting down, these symptoms abate, and the patient feels quite as well as he ever did — There is frequently a pain directly under the sternum and

and the patient complains of a
pain of rising there. But on the
contrary sometimes no pain whatever
occurs — The pulse is weak, trembling
now and then tense — If however
the disease has been of long continuance
the symptoms produced by walking
will not subside so immediately —
They are now also brought on by
coughing, sneezing, laughing or any
disturbance whatever of the mind — The
patient is ~~been~~ unable to lie down
in bed and his arms are obliged to

in bed up — The fits most generally come on in two or three weeks, the intervals however are shorter — they generally occur at night, from the system being at that time in a debilitated state, consequently most predisposed — These are the most usual appearances of this disease — But we meet with a great variety in the symptoms of this, as well as other diseases —

Some physicians have considered this a dangerous and others an uncer-

able disease – Hence we find Dr. Heberden and other writers, who have given us a most accurate account of it, say very little as to its treatment. But I believe it to be completely within the power of medicine; and shall now proceed to consider its mode of treatment, and enumerate those remedies, which, if prescribed under proper circumstances, cannot fail to cure it –

In its commencement, it is generally attended with a plethoric state of the system and tense pulse, in

which case bleeding becomes necessary
This is to be repeated as often as the
pulse and other symptoms may re=
quire - 2nd Purges - These should be
of a mild and lenient nature viz -
Gum: Tart:, Glauber salts, or castor oil -
they are only intended to prevent consti=
pation - For here as in all other affections
of the breast, active cathartics have
proved injurious - 3d Emetics - 4th -
Low diet - this should consist of bege=
table, with a little salted meat, to
prevent the tone of the stomach being

destroyed, by the too sudden abstraction of solid food - If after persisting in this mode of treatment for some time, the symptoms should still continue - we must have recourse at this to a Salivation, which be effectual must be continued two three weeks - I have witnessed with pleasure the good effects of this noble remedy in the private practice of my respected preceptor* - Should it however fail of success upon the first trial, we must not be deterred from making

* Dr Benjn Rush

a second and even a third time of it - For I conceive it as essentially necessary to dilute three or four times to cure this formidable disease, as it is to bleed the same number of times to cure a common case of Pleurisy - By this, however, I do not mean to limit it even to that number, but recommend a repetition of it, as often as the urgency of the symptoms may require. This Force; of a most powerful nature aided by cordial diet - The tonics that have been found useful are - Tar, Garlic, Powder of Roses - Nitrate of Silver, Sulphate of Zinc and preparations of Iron -

Arsenic has been highly recommended in this disease – Asafetida should also be employed, particularly when there is any affection of the nerves – 7th – Diuretics such as the Digitalis, Squills and Spirits of Turpentine have been found serviceable 8th – Issues – Dr. MacBride speaks very highly of this remedy – He relates the case of a man effectually cured by wearing two of them, one on each thigh – To all these remedies may be added, keeping the feet warm and accommodating the dress to the change in the weather –

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